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18 December 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Personnel Management

FROM :

SUBJECT : CT Hiring Problems -- Some
Recommended Solutions

REFERENCE : Memorandum to Self re CT
Hiring Problems, dated
1 December 1978

1. Reference (attached to complete the record) was my preliminary findings on Directorate of Operations Career Trainee hiring problems. This memorandum contains additional observations, conclusions and recommendations. It is clear we will not meet the targeted 120 CTs for CY 1979 and will likely be at least 50% short. Moreover, our performance will not get better as we move into the 1980s unless we make some changes. While we are doing an excellent job of milking the applicant population for potential CTs, we are rejecting and losing a few who are interested and able to be successful case officers. We should temporarily revise our CT standards, improve our employment package, and provide IA and case officer assistance to the Office of Personnel at peak recruiting periods.

2. In CY 1978, we expect to look at approximately 1,200 applications for employment with CIA as potential CTs. Of this number, we expect to actually hire 50 (or 4.2%) for the CT program. About 17.2% will withdraw and we will reject 78.6%. Those who withdraw feel the life style of a case officer is not for them or their families, but others in the meantime would have taken another job or

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received a better offer. The principal reasons for rejections in order of frequency are:

a. Wrong personality (introverted, loner, not people-oriented, doesn't inspire confidence, no interpersonal skills, doesn't respond well on his feet, lack of self-confidence, immature).

b. Not very smart (lack of education, poor grades, low test scores) and can't talk (sloppy speech mannerisms, inarticulate, lack of verbal skills).

c. No language achievements and/or low foreign language aptitude.

3. Contrary to current mythology, very few are rejected for habitual or recent drug use (only about 5%). Although it has been stated that applications for CIA employment are at an all-time high, only one of five applicants is interested and/or appears suited for Directorate employment as case officers. Moreover, the consensus is that the quality of applicants is significantly lower than the past, as witnessed by the high rejection rate. The theory that overseas service no longer attracts young Americans is refuted by the 18,000 to 20,000 applications for the Foreign Service and the 11,000 to 12,000 who actually take the Foreign Service exam. It might be fair to conclude that a case officer career does not appear as honorable and fashionable as it once did to a select segment of young job seekers. To add to our problems of image, the Clandestine Service has gotten another bum rap of being an ungrateful, unfeeling and unreliable employer.

4. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder the Directorate is having trouble attracting potential CTs. We are going to have to promote and coax, but this is not new, as this was our strategy in the past. Except for the five-year period between 1963 and 1968 when we took in about 115 CTs per year, the average Directorate CT intake averaged out at 42 per annum. Attachment B is a rough graph on CT intake and attrition by year, from 1951 to present. During the high

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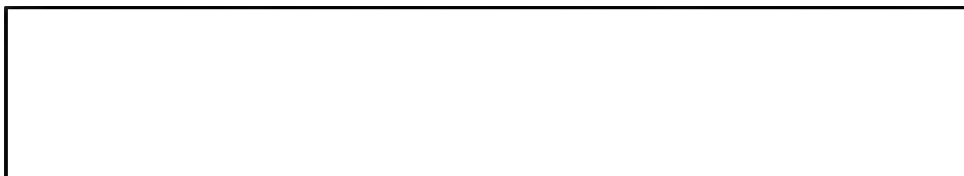
periods between 1963 and 1968, we had a network of 28 recruiters vice today's eight and nine, vice four CT program officers. We had the "Hundred Universities" program where CIA invited department heads to Headquarters for briefings and discussions. An adjunct was the University Associates Program which encouraged university professors to steer potential CTs our way. Finally, our recruiters were actually on campus. Today, we are on a confrontation course with a number of universities, and in no place are we in an envied cooperative position of the past. Former employees and retirees have also been sources of leads, but today's atmosphere discourages solicitation or even acceptance of such assistance. Fortunately, our image problem will pass in time, but, regrettably, there is little we can do to speed up the process.

5. As presently constituted, there is no way the CT program can hire the targeted 120 CTs per year for the next several years. By all accounts, we will be lucky to be able to hire 40 to 50 CTs. The following recommendations could result in increasing our annual CT intake by 30 or more.

a. Temporarily shelve the language requirement. The Foreign Service does not require language proficiency or aptitude on the basis that most people can be taught a language.

this is not acceptable. FS jobs are different.

b. Reduce the three- to four-week lag between receipt of applicant interest in the Office of Personnel and its transmittal to the CT office for follow-up. By speeding up the processing time all along the line, we can cut down the number of those withdrawing because they couldn't wait. The Directorate can offer up a few IAs to help field recruiters and the Office of Personnel during peak periods. For example, it took eight months to complete the processing of the responses from the New York Times ad of March 1978.



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6. For fear of external criticism and dubious internal administrative reasons, we have stripped the Clandestine Service of all special employee benefits. No other federal employer has engaged in such an orgy of self-flagellation; in fact, other agencies continually try to get more for their employees -- to wit, State's recent attempt to obtain a high-one retirement formula. All civilian foreign affairs agencies have a death gratuity and yearly educational travel. All civilian federal law enforcement agencies have a premium pay of 20% in lieu of overtime, plus a generous death gratuity. Most professionals of the old line civilian departments get a virtually automatic promotion to GS-11 or GS-13. Directorate case officers work at least a week and a half overseas for a week's pay, and endure the hardships, inconveniences and risks of both the foreign affairs and law enforcement agencies. What do we offer our officers and potential case officers? We won't give them anything which some other agency doesn't already have, and won't even give them what other agencies already have. We have taken away a predictable promotion progression to GS-11 for CTs. We no longer ship a CT's family and household effects to Washington, and won't do the reverse when he retires. If you are a CIA employee, you must resign and go on contract to be a CT. If you are a new employee, you must accept a less-than-one-year contract to become a CT. With this kind of package, I don't see how any CIA personnel recruiter can coax many reasonably qualified applicants to join the CT program. It's in our power to improve this employment package, and I am aware that you have signaled similar concerns in your memorandum to the DDO. We demand from our employees that a job be done, and we shouldn't be ashamed of giving them a few special, but deserved benefits. Attachment C contains a few reminders of what case officers do above and beyond the call of duty.



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cc: Chief, CMS

Approved For Release 2004/01/29 : CIA-RDP83-00156R001000090022-4

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